

# DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS

DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN | [INFO@DIGNITYINSCHOOLS.ORG](mailto:INFO@DIGNITYINSCHOOLS.ORG) | [WWW.DIGNITYINSCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.DIGNITYINSCHOOLS.ORG)

**We must maintain the Federal Role in Education and create meaningful accountability to ensure that schools are practicing non-discriminatory discipline, creating positive and inclusive school climates, and acting to end school pushout.**



## MEANINGFUL EDUCATION REFORM MUST ADDRESS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND CLIMATE.

- Academic success (and failure) is driven by school climate.
- Exclusionary discipline predicts dropout and poor academic performance.
- There are proven, effective approaches to discipline that reduce discipline rates while improving school climate, student achievement, school safety, and staff morale.

## A MEANINGFUL EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM MUST:

- Rely on multiple measures, not just standardized tests, to assess school performance;
- Hold schools accountable, not just for academic performance, but for improving graduation rates and addressing school pushout;
- Implement improvement strategies that are supportive, not punitive, of schools, and involve the input of parents, students, and community; and,
- Address school discipline and climate.

## THE UNITED STATES HAS A PUSHOUT PROBLEM.

- During the 2011-2012 school year, nearly 3.5 million public school students were suspended out of school at least once. Of the 3.5 Million suspended, approximately 1.55 million were suspended at least twice.
- Students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ students are most likely to be subjected to punitive discipline practices and policies that push them out of school.
  - African American students are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white peers, despite data showing that they do not misbehave more frequently.
  - Students with disabilities represent only 13 percent of student enrollment nationally, but comprised one-quarter of students arrested and referred to law enforcement during the 2011-2012 school year.
  - LGBTQ students are more likely than their peers to be bullied by both students and school staff and misidentified as aggressors rather than victims of bullying.
  - Most suspensions are for minor non-violent misbehavior like “insubordination” or dress code violations.



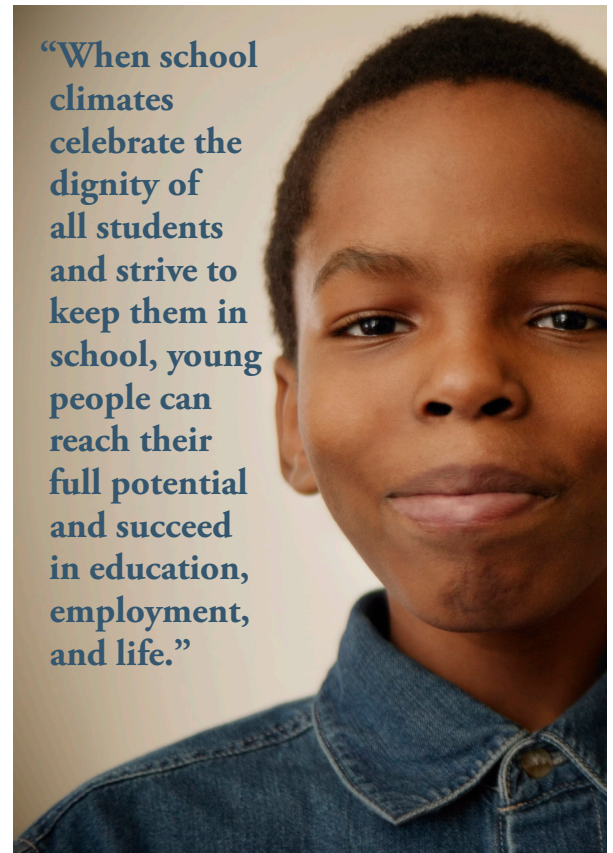


**WHEN STUDENTS ARE PUSHED OUT, WE ALL LOSE. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE RETAINED A GRADE, DROP OUT OF SCHOOL, DISENGAGE FROM LEARNING, AND COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

- Schools lose hundreds of instructional hours to exclusionary discipline each year.
- A student with three or more suspensions by his sophomore year is five times more likely to drop out.
- Children who do not finish high school are more than eight times more likely to go to prison than those who graduate.

**WE MUST PRESERVE FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY SO WE CAN STOP SCHOOL PUSHOUT.**

1. All schools receiving federal funds—elementary, secondary, and charter—must remain subject to federal accountability.
2. Federal accountability must support meaningful improvement in all schools by:
  - (a) Relying on multiple measures, not just standardized tests, to assess school performance;
  - (b) Holding schools accountable, not just for academic performance, but for improving graduation rates and addressing school pushout; and
  - (c) Implementing improvement strategies and supports, not punitive sanctions against schools, and involve the input of parents, students, and community-based organizations.
3. To be truly meaningful, an accountability framework must address issues of school discipline and school climate by collecting and reporting disaggregated data on discipline and supporting schools to create positive environments for learning through proven practices, such as restorative justice and Positive Behavior Supports and professional development training on implicit bias and cultural competency.



*The Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) is a coalition of 95 organizations from 24 states, including students, parents, educators, researchers, LGBTQ, civil rights, youth advocacy, and education organizations, dedicated to ending punitive school discipline practices that push students out of school and into the juvenile justice system. DSC is committed to the vision of a fully functional, accountable, and successful public school system that protects every student's human right to a quality education and to be treated with dignity.*